

REMARKS

In the September 28, 2004 Office Action, claims 6 and 10-13 are objected to for minor informalities, and claims 1-4 and 9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,107,963 to Hansen. Also, claims 5-7 are indicated as being allowable if rewritten into independent form, claim 8 is allowed, and claims 10-13 is indicated as being allowable if rewritten to overcome the objection.

By the present amendment, claims 1, 6, 7, and 10 are amended, and claim 5 is canceled, leaving claims 1-4 and 6-13 pending in the application with claims 1, 8 and 10 being independent.

Claim 1 is amended to include the limitations of dependent claim 5, which is indicated as being allowable if rewritten into independent form. Claim 6 is amended to change its dependency to claim 1 and to eliminate the objected to language of "on the one hand side" and "on the other hand side." Claim 10 is amended to address the objection thereto by adding the conjunction "add" to separate the recitation of "said guide means" from "connecting said first and second contact elements of said first and second connectors." Claim 7 is amended to change its dependency to claim 1.

In view of the foregoing, independent claims 1 and 10 are allowable. Therefore, Applicants believe the application, including claims 1-4 and 6-13, is in allowable condition. If the application is not found to be in condition for allowance, Applicants request that the Examiner contact the undersigned, preferably prior to February 28, 2005, so that appropriate steps may be taken to maintain the pendency of the application.

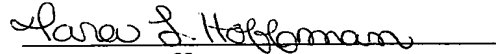
Prompt and favorable action is respectfully solicited.

A petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.136(a) for a two month extension of time is submitted herewith. However, please charge any shortage of fees or credit any overpayment thereof to

Serial No. 10/603,671
Attorney Docket No. 111427.00603
Reply to 08.28.04 Office Action

BLANK ROME, LLP, Deposit Account No. 23-2185 (111427-00603). Any fee due is authorized above.

Respectfully submitted,


Tara L. Hoffman
Reg. No. 46,510

BLANK ROME LLP
600 New Hampshire Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20037
(202) 772-5800

Dated: February 8, 2005